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QUEBEC HILL;

OR,

CANADIAN SCENERY.

A POEM.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY

J. MACKAY.

— EGO LAUDO RURIS AMOENI
RIVOS, ET MUSCO CIRCUMLITA SAXA, NUMUSQUE.

HOR.



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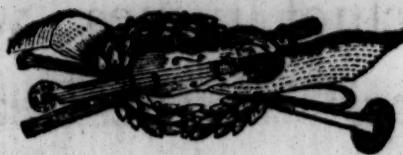
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PREFACE.

WHEN a literary publication is destitute of internal evidences of merit, any endeavour to recommend it to the Public by a Preface is, undoubtedly, labour misplaced.

Whether the following poetical production is intitled to notice, the competent Reader may decide for himself: but, should it be found entirely uninteresting, the Author sincerely wishes it may sink into immediate oblivion.

By far the greatest part of the Poem was written in Canada, where the Writer has spent a considerable portion of his time. In the prosecution of the Work, perspicuity has

been one of his chief studies; well aware, that no benefit can arise to the Reader from what he is unable to understand: yet, notwithstanding his solicitude in this respect, a few explanatory Notes were considered, if not absolutely necessary, at least not improper.

The Author is sensible that the Poem might have been rendered, what some men of learning term, more poetical, if less attention had been paid to veracity; but, to lovers of truth, no apology is necessary on this head, and, to those of a contrary disposition, none is due.

Upon the whole, the Poet is not without hopes, that some small degree of satisfaction may result from the perusal of a poem that treats, in some measure, of a country so remarkable for its romantic scenery, and the vicissitudes of extreme heat and intense cold.



QUEBEC HILL.

PART I.

SUMMER.

My Doric reed for laurels would contend,
Where fam'd Quebec's aspiring heights ascend :
The native scenes that scatter'd round them lie,
Engage the mind, and charm the gazing eye ;
Here, woods and waters, wilds and vales conspire
To swell the cadence of the rustic lyre.

The lawns of Virgil, and his silvan shade,
Tho' in the poet's choicest colours clad,
Should here confess description more sublime,
Could my weak numbers emulate the clime.

wom

On

QUEBEC HILL.

On either hand, wide open on the view,
 Descending floods and groves of varied hue:
 Here, glitt'ring hamlets swell along the dale,
 And fragrant foliage clothes the winding vale;
 Here, lovely bow'rs, unknown to classic lay
 And culture's charms, their mingled sweets display:
 There, forests spread beyond the bounded sight,
 And crown the distant mountains' tow'ring height.
 The varied verdure of each hill and plain,
 And simple grandeur of the rural scene,
 Bid Admiration's genial glow arise
 As o'er the pleasing whole the vision flies*.

Oft have I heard Columbian climes pourtray'd,
 And oft the dangers of the mazy shade,
 In early youth, when, by the rural blaze,
 The traveller told the tale of other days:
 With him explord the wide extending wood,
 Or climb'd the hill, or cross'd the copious flood:

* The country around Quebec abounds with prospects in a high degree delightful to such as have a relish for romantic scenery; but the soil is, in general, poor, and unproductive of corn. Few parts of Canada are remarkable for their fertility in this respect; and it is the quantity, and not the quality, of their lands that enables the inhabitants of this country to export wheat and flour.

Now

Now to these days faint memory refers,
As realiz'd th' ideal scene appears.

When Greece her skill in arts and arms disclos'd,
And haughty Xerxes' hostile bands oppos'd ;
When great in arms the Roman state arose,
And proudly triumph'd o'er her warlike foes ;
These climes, unknown to foreign fame or rage,
Nor felt their sway, nor swell'd the poet's page.

No musty record can the curious trace,
Engross'd by annals of the savage race :
Involv'd in darkness their achievements lay
Till fam'd Columbus sought a western way*.

The Antiquarian here may search in vain
For walls erected in Severus' reign ;
Or lofty tow'rs that their declension show,
Or cities built some thousand years ago :
For arts and antiques visit Eastern ground,
Here, Nature simple and sublime is found :

* Alluding to the famous Columbus' having discovered America ; or, at least, some of its islands, while employed in a fruitless attempt to obtain a western passage to the E. Indies.

Alas! the human, sunk in folly, strays
'Mong the sublime the physical displays.

Ye who, in stanzas, celebrate the Po,
Or teach the Tyber in your strains to flow,
How would you toil for numbers to proclaim
The liquid grandeur of St. Lawrence' Stream?
Offspring of lakes that like to seas extend*,
Where floods, unknown, their willing tribute send;
Adorn'd by ifles, that, crown'd with trees, arise,
And hemm'd by lofty groves of various dyes:
On their expanse the vent'rous trader bears
The downy furs exchang'd for Britain's wares:
Here, as on Ocean's breast, the tempests roar,
And, round the bark, impetuous billows pour†:
Nor safe the task to tread their winding shores,
Or range those wilds the Indian explores;

* The celebrated lakes of Upper Canada, now, in part, ceded to the United States: the largest of them, viz. Lake Superior, is said to be 500 leagues, or 1500 miles in circumference; and the least, Lake Ontario, about 200 leagues.

† Violent storms are frequent on these lakes; and the Mohawk, a large ship, mounting several guns, was lost on Lake Ontario a few years ago, not to mention smaller vessels.

Where

Where danger's hue in divers forms prevails,
And ev'ry grove a hidden foe conceals.

Here, prowling wolves their struggling captives tear,
And rattling snakes advise of perils near:
Whene'er the stranger hears the warning sound,
He starts, he flies to shun the baleful wound:
So fly the few to higher joys inclin'd,
From those gay snares would wound their peace of mind:
Here fiery tygers darting on their prey,
In comely forms, infatiate rage display;
The furly bear emerging from his den,
In awkward prance explores the wood amain;
With circling paws, and high-erected crest,
He folds the gasping victim to his breast:
On ev'ry side the speckled adder roves,
And brutal warfare fills the chequer'd groves.
Thus, worldly pleasures fair in outward show,
Conceal the stings that ever lurk below.

Here, deep involv'd in woods, the Indians range
In quest of prey, or panting for revenge;
With fixt resolve, and nerves inur'd to toil,
The roe to vanquish, or the foe to foil:

With

QUEBEC HILL.

With steady aim they hurl their darts from far,
And bleeding victims own the pointed war*.

Here, dread diseases rise from fætid fens†,
Spread thro' the woods, and hover o'er the plains ;
Cramps, fevers, agues, vent'rous traders seize,
Who, seeking wealth, relinquish health and ease ;
A sad exchange ! how dearly won that wealth,
Acquir'd by loss of happiness and health ?

Between where Erie his wide tribute pours,
And where extend Ontario's swelling shores,
High soar Niagara's renowned Falls,
Whose dreadful grandeur passengers appalls :
With force collected, down the waters roll
Condensed, spread, impatient of control :

* The Indians of Canada are, in general, exceedingly dextrous in the use of the bow and arrows ; but, since their intercourse with the Europeans, they use these and the fire-lock promiscuously.

† It is not wonderful that the fever and ague, as well as other maladies, are so prevalent in Upper Canada, a country, for the most part, covered with forests and lakes ; and intersected with swamps which, in the summer season, emit vapours highly pernicious to the human constitution.

A POEM.

9

Now, o'er the tallest cliff in chaos bright,
The sparkling column wings its giddy flight ;
In one wide wave the bounding torrent pours,
And echo swells responsive to its roars ;
Thro' pendant surges gasping fishes fly,
And in the circling eddies lifeless lie ;
The rising mist obscures the face of day,
Faint seems the sun, and feeble gleams his ray ;
Out from the scene the lofty banks retire,
And shun the foaming torrent's mighty ire.
Oft, savage beasts, descending from the wood,
To lave their sides, or cross the ample flood,
Become involv'd within the Rapids' verge,
And downward urg'd, hard struggle to emerge ;
A vain attempt, ev'n birds partake their fate,
And scream and spread their feeble wings too late ;
For as 'gainst speed augmenting they contend,
Adown the steep terrific they descend.

So careless, roving men, devoid of thought,
Are in the rapids of their passions caught ;
At times, alarm'd, they strive the shore to gain,
But, deep involv'd, their efforts oft are vain ;

D

And

And soon o'erwhelm'd by excess' baleful breath,
In bloom of youth they prove the pangs of death.

Unsettled still the river pours along,
Thro' sloping glades, unknown to classic song ;
Or boils chaotic round each jutting rock,
That, stubborn, shrinks not from its sounding shock :
At length, more calm, it murmur'ring glides away,
While sportive fishes on its surface play.
Great are the treasures of your ample woods,
And large your tribute, wide-extending floods ;
Slow parts the river from its final source*,
And various winding prosecutes its course ;
While, with majestic dignity, it claims
The humble tribute of the lesser streams.
Great is the wealth its fruitful waves enclose,
These brightly gleam, and gold bespangles those ;
The finny race its mighty current crowd,
And yield the natives salutary food :

* By the river St. Lawrence' final source, is here meant Lake Ontario, it being the last of the great lakes through which the most direct and largest branch of those bodies of water, which form the St. Lawrence, passes.

As some choice swain, bless'd in a feeling mind,
Intent on aiding each poor famish'd hind;
His noble bent with ample means are crown'd,
Not to amass, but distribute around.

Long rolls the stream, or rapid, or serene,
Now o'er the steep, and now along the plain;
When, gentler gliding, it forgets to brawl,
As still it laves the shores of Montreal*:
That verdant isle, where we with commerce find
The precious gifts of Nature amply join'd;
Enrich'd with culture, bloom its fertile grounds,
And scenes romantic circumvent its bounds.
As down it flows how pleasant is the scene,
The shade, the lawn, the burnish'd cot is seen:
Hills, dales, and forests on each border smile,
And rural plenty smooths the trav'ller's toil:
Yet, here neglected droops the human mind,
Or, bred in error, scrupulously blind†.

Be

* The large and beautiful island of Montreal is well known. Opposite the town of Montreal, there is a rapid which sometimes prevents ships from ascending for several weeks: on this account it is much regretted that the city was not built at the foot of the current.

† It may not be improper to mention, that almost all the inhabitants of Lower Canada are papists. There is, of late, an English bishop

QUEBEC HILL.

Be brief, my strain, see where each placid wave
Quebec's firm front with gentle murmurs lave;
The frozen fetters that their course delay'd,
In glowing Summer's ardent sunshine fled *,
Upon its waves the navies gently ride,
And lo! a fleet approaching on the tide.
The sons of Britain hasten to the strand,
See, where, beneath, in swelling crowds they stand!
The eager groups with expectation glow,
As to the shore the slender barges row;
The gay and busy have their various views,
These pant for merchandise, and those for news.

bishop settled at Quebec. It is said, he receives 2000l. per annum: his income, for one year, would be sufficient to erect a church; yet, hitherto, no English church has been built there. In Montreal there are two protestant churches.

* In the summer season, the weather, in general, is extremely hot in Canada, except when the wind veers about to a northerly direction. Some days in July and August are said to be as intensely hot in this country as in the West Indies. Frequently, in the months above-mentioned, the sky appears in a great measure covered with red and inflammable clouds, while at the same time there prevails such a profound calm that one can scarcely determine from what quarter the wind blows. These heats have been known to affect strangers in an alarming manner; and are generally followed by tremendous storms of thunder and lightning.

The

The stream, with lazy motion, pours along,
While, in the sun-beam, gleams the finny throng ;
Its heaving banks with rip'ning increase clad,
And, interspers'd, the cottages are spread :
Higher, the flocks are skipping with their brood,
How close behind appears th' entangled wood !
The distant hills, with arbor richly clad,
Afford the wild inhabitants a shade.

Nigh yonder fence, that, high, the prospect bounds,
Where deep dug trenches intersect the grounds ;
Close by a stone, that swells upon the heath,
'Twas WOLF, victorious, clos'd his eyes in death !
Beneath the gloom of night his navies weigh'd,
And pass'd these threat'ning turrets on the tide ;
He climb'd the frowning mountain's lofty side ;
He fought, and bled ! he conquer'd, and he died !
Short was his span on this terrestrial vale,
And when he fell, how many warriors fell !

O cruel War, how fraught with human woes* !
Blood thy delight, and slaughter thy repose !

How

* It is necessary to mention, that this and the following eleven verses
E allude,

How doth thy fury wound the feeling soul,
And scatter misery from pole to pole!
What art thou, Martial Fame, so highly priz'd,
Where art thou sought, or in what feats compriz'd?
Upon the field of battle thou art sought,
By fire and sword, by blood and carnage bought;
Each bloody laurel that thy brow surrounds,
Still points to widows, orphans, or to wounds;
Still grieves Humanity to hear each deed,
That heaps new honours on thy sanguine head.

On this wide Plain no cultur'd field is seen*,
No rural hamlet variegates the scene;
Here oft the covey rests secure of foes,
Ah, 'tis a dream, how short is its repose!
A distant grove conceals the artful swain,
Who gently creeps a nearer view to gain;
With gaze intense he takes his steady aim,
And pours his thunder on the trembling game.

allude, to unjust and savage warfare, and the celebrity deeds of this nature conferr on the principal actors, however barbarous and undeserving in reality.

* The Plains of Abraham.

But,

But, hark! I hear the voice of joy and song,
It issues from the barks that skim along;
The simple matelots, a noisy train,
To plying oars keep time with tuneful strain;
The rising notes with speed to echo fly,
Loud, and more loud, the lofty hills reply.

See to the left a pleasant vale extends,
By yonder font, that, there its journey ends;
The glitt'ring sun-beams on the current gleam,
As smooth it mingles with the greater stream;
Strew'd are its banks with many a rural charm,
The blanchant cōt, the ample well-fenc'd farm;
The glimm'ring glade, perfum'd with fragrant flow'rs,
The shelter'd garden, and the shady bow'rs:
Here, loves the lark, on rapid wing, to soar,
And flutt'ring songsters strains harmonious pour;
Here, jocund youth and pensive age repair,
And busy traders court a pause from care.

But, chiefly, view the slope of yonder hill,
Where scatter'd huts extend along the rill;
On either side, wide spreads the villa's bounds,
And waving forests circumvent its grounds:

There,

There, tam'd and staid, the Indian seeks repose*,
 Nor still imagines all the world his foes ;
 With art and care, he cultivates his lands,
 And gathers in their fruits with willing hands.
 Yet 'mong the few who shun the forest's gloom,
 And Europe's garb and languages assume,
 Still sloth and ignorance our pity claim,
 And fiery draughts debilitate their frame.
 Destructive liquids, Britain's cherish'd bane,
 What ghastly horrors flourish in your train !
 Bloated by you, the man of wit expires,
 And savage nations feel your frantic fires.

Lower, what landscapes meet my wand'ring eyes,
 How gay the rural villages arise,
 The rip'ning corn, slow wavers in the breeze,
 'Midst lawns, enrich'd with tufts of nodding trees ;

* Alluding to a colony of Indians settled many years ago, in a village called Lorette, at a few miles distance from Quebec. They are now so far civilized as to cultivate their lands for their subsistence; yet many of them still retain, not a little, of the indolent roving disposition of their ancestors. They are so far initiated in the doctrines of the church of Rome as to go to mass, confess, &c. A colony of a similar nature exists near Montreal.

The pointed fence each peasant's right contains,
And forms a barrier to the neighb'ring swains:
Here, easy lives the hind, rich, void of pelf*,
For freedom's ease, and competence is wealth:
But here blind Superstition holds his sway;
And artful Priestcraft leads the mind astray:
Nigh yonder hill, where various verdure grows,
The village spire its soaring stature shows;
The dome beneath for worship is assign'd,
And thence, untaught, returns the weary hind.
As humid vapours cloud the face of day,
And lead the wand'ring traveller astray,
So papal mists obscure the peasant's mind,
And to the clearest precepts keep him blind.
Yet, here, the mist commences to dispell
By slow degrees; its progres who can tell?
May swift decay seize Superstition's gloom,
And true Devotion flourish in its room;
And placid Peace, that spurns Commotion's call,
And tender Charity, the friend of all.

* The Canadian peasantry might live very independent were they but industrious; this, however, is by no means generally the case, and hence, some of them are in indigent circumstances.

Adown the vale, with fixt regard, I trace
Where Lawrence' willing waves Orleans embrace;
Its verdant shores, encircled by the floods,
And round begirt by many-colour'd woods :
Enchanting prospect ! fair, delightful isle,
Where smiling plenty crowns the peasant's toil ;
Here, Autumn, in his best attire, appears,
And purling streams are music to the ears ;
Here, the cuckoo his early visit pays,
And tuneful nightingales resume their lays :
How sweetly varied is the rural scene,
Here, spreads the lawn, there, bends the golden grain ;
Nigh each neat cot the well-stock'd garden lies ;
And waving orchards, not unfruitful, rise.
Upon the stream quick beats the noisy mill,
And well-fed cattle gambol on the hill ;
The feather'd coveys haunt each shady grove,
Where, charm'd with Nature, I was wont to rove :
The maple-trees their liquid treasure pour,
And, by imparting, but increase their store ;
Behind, the oak his ample branches spreads,
And stately cedars raise their lofty heads.

Yet

Yet as the landscape, thus, in part pourtray'd,
Admits of light, it will admit of shade:
Tho' gay the scene, with varied foliage shows,
And, view'd from far, in richer verdure glows:
More near, is seen, the harvest-choaking tare,
And pointed thistles on each hand appear;
I see by orchards, crabs for apples borne,
And greedy locusts blast the springing corn.
Ye, who, thro' life, ambition, still enslave*,
With groundless hopes, and airy views deceive,
Ye know how chang'd your prospects still appear,
When you, like me, examine them more near.

See, o'er the stream, where wide extends Beaupré,
Hemm'd in by woods, and profitably gay.
There, Montmorency's Falls attract the ear,
In fancy, still the foaming flood I hear:
The rapid stream rolls with diminish'd might,
As if appalled by the giddy height;
But when, at length, more active, down it pours,
Like bursting thunder are its mighty roars:

* Alluding to mercenary ambition; for their is a species of ambition, not only blameless, but commendable.

QUEBEC HILL.

Impell'd, the fishes swifter motion know,
 And dart, reluctant, in the gulf below ;
 And while the torrent, still unfettled glows,
 Its troubled current in the Lawrence flows.

Behind these scenes the ample forests spread,
 And form a midnight gloom beneath the shade ;
 Descending floods in sweet confusion fall,
 'Midst stately pines, huge oaks, and cedars tall ;
 The lofty hills, that, onward, rise in crowds,
 Oft hide their summits in the bending clouds.
 But now, nor dusky shades obscure the sky,
 Nor pregnant clouds portending tempest nigh ;
 Unveil'd, the mountains show their lofty heads,
 Which form a contrast to the humble meads :
 Save, that, from far, the intervening space,
 Th' unequal swellings of their sides deface ;
 That, richly cloth'd, in colours of the air,
 Increas'd in size, and more remote appear.

My muse*, averse on vent'rous wing to soar,
 With pleasure settles on the rural bow'r;

* Muse, or imagination.

Where

Where now the flocks hie homeward o'er the plain,
And tender lambkins to their dams complain ;
The reapers slowly from the fields retire,
And curling clouds announce the ev'ning fire.
The yellow Indians gather on the strand,
And push their slender canoes out from land ;
With gentle strokes their paddles cleave the flood,
True to the touch their nimble barges scud :
Hark ! how in native strains they wildly yell,
While pliant echoes still responsive swell.
The fated angler, richly laden, leaves
The friendly Lawrence' pure, prolific waves,
A while respiting the unwary brood,
Who round his snares, secure of danger, crowd.
The feather'd warblers now forsake the dale,
And in the matted groves their plumes conceal,
No more to ravish with melodious lays,
Till radiant Phœbus pours the morning blaze.

See, underneath, the parting solar beam,
With milder lustre trembles o'er the stream ;
See, how the ling'ring ships have spread each sail,
To court the influence of the dying gale;

The weary sailor, toils and dangers o'er,
With kindling rapture spies the welcome shore.

How sweet, how lovely, is this ev'ning hour,
How fraught with fragrance each surrounding bow'r!
Each fiery cloud, that lately scorch'd the wind,
In lightning lost: no sickly dews descend:
The fanning breezes, gently flutt'ring, spread
The grateful odours of the flow'ry mead;
The solar orb on azure sky declines,
And, on the smiling scene, serenely shines.

Thus, glides the ev'ning of some gentle sage,
Refin'd by grace, and silver'd o'er with age;
His closing day recedes from sky serene,
And purer sunshine gilds its setting scene.





QUEBEC HILL.

PART II.

WINTER.

SINCE, on these heights, the Muse delighted sung,
While fragrant verdure various round her sprung,
How chang'd the stream, the woodland, and the plain,
One dreary waste succeeds the blooming scene !
Save where the spiral pine, and hardy thorn,
And cedar, green, their native spot adorn ;
Or, where some plants of less distinguish'd forms,
Spread o'er the scene, and bloom amid the storms.
The feather'd songsters shun the leafless bow'r,
Where, in soft notes, they hail'd the morning hour ;
To greener shades the nightingale repairs,
And, near the line, a warmer season shares.

No

QUEBEC HILL.

No more the roses glow along the mead,
 No more the groves their wonted odours shed ;
 The nipping frost their tender branches wound,
 And roaring winds disperse their leaves around ;
 No more these fields the charms of culture know ,
 Nor joyful peasants guide the friendly plow .

As where Siberia's barren region lies,
 Here, show'rs descend, and howling tempests rise ;
 Keen piercing frosts condense the falling snow ,
 And thick'ning floods with fainter murmurs flow :
 The shiv'ring hind forsakes the cheerless plain ,
 Where Winter's train in chilly rigour reign :
 Stern Winter rules, in frigid splendours clad ,
 That o'er each object his dominion spread ;
 His hoary robe the sleeping earth conceals ,
 Arrests the floods, and levels hills and vales !

How still these heights ! no more is heard, around ,
 The grating saw, or hammer's pond'rous sound ;
 No more their strokes reverb'rate on the ear ,
 Or, borne by echo, murmur in the air :
 In shelter'd sheds the drooping artists meet ,
 Where flaming faggots aid the vital heat .

See

See, underneath, where wide extends the plain,
That chequer'd seems with carriages and men;
Where now the courser drives the gaudy car*,
And weary steeds drag on their loads from far;
There, once, the barges skimm'd along the stream,
And fishes glitter'd in the solar beam:
There, late, the ships the yielding current cleave,
And swiftly bounded o'er the swelling wave;
But now its breast, in frozen fetters bound,
Unyielding, emulates the rocks around †.

How black appear the dark dismantled woods,
In striking contrast to the frozen floods;

* In the winter season many of the inhabitants of Quebec amuse themselves by riding on the ice in carioles, or carriages without wheels. On these occasions they are accommodated with warm skins, sometimes lined with flannel, or green baize, with which they may, if necessary, cover their whole bodies, while their heads are equipt with fur caps.

† The river St. Lawrence is every winter frozen between Quebec and L' Isle D' Orleans, or the Isle of Orleans, about a league and a half from that city; but not annually from side to side at Quebec. There, the river becomes very narrow, and the current strong; the action of the tide is also a preventative; for though the sea does not come within several leagues of Quebec, yet the tide, by preventing the stream from descending with its usual rapidity, raises the water to a great height, and thus enables it to shatter ice of a vast thickness. The fragments of ice, thus torn from the rest, swell into impending cliffs, and shining mountains.

These, clad in snow, reflect a dazzling light,
Those, wrapp'd in gloom, relieve the weary sight.

Let each beware, who, with unseason'd eyes*,
Meets those bright beams, that, snow-reflected, rise;
For now the Sun, unclouded, drives his car,
Thro' purest air, where seldom shades appear;
His radiant beams, uncheck'd, more dazzling flow,
Blaze on the ice, and glitter on the snow:
Save, when the tempest gathers on the day,
Obscures the skies, and checks the solar ray;
Terrific grandeur! when dark show'rs descend,
Upon the pinions of the raging wind;
Howling amain thro' yonder woodland wastes,
That wave their hoary branches in the blasts;
While former snows in circling eddies rise,
And meet the falling torrents in the skies!
The shiv'ring savage loiters in his shed †,
Unable thro' the depths of snow to wade;

His

* When the cold is most intense in Canada, the sky is generally unclouded: on these occasions the organs of sight, especially of strangers, are much impaired by the flood of light to which they are exposed, unless provided with some shade, such as green or black gauze &c. to blunt its splendor.

† Meaning the Indians that live in the woods around and below Quebec.

His useless bow lies careless by, unstrung,
Or to the humble roof is pendant hung ;
Supinely feasting on his former toil,
He longs again the stately deer to foil ;
Or, if he ventures in the woods, to trace
The recent footsteps, or assume the chace,
Short can he stray, the dreary groves around
The utmost verge of his excursions bound.
The greedy wolf, with caution, treads the wild,
Where, 'gainst the roe, he doubtful conflict held ;
The artful carcajou, with circling tail,
Can scarcely longer o'er the elk prevail ;
The sleepy bear is to his den confin'd,
With nodding crest, unequal moves the hind ;
The hungry tygers still more fierce appear,
And savage howlings fill the ambient air.

The northern winds now sweep along the woods,
Fraught with the ardour of the frozen floods,
That stretch along the pole, keen as the gales,
That spread athwart Siberia's cheerless vales.

bec. In the upper country, where the winter is more mild; and the snows are less deep, the savages range through the woods at this season of the year much as usual.

Out

Out from the arctic pole the potent blasts,
Swift wing their flight, and o'er the dreary wastes,
Both land and sea, that form the utmost north,
Now link'd together, howling, they rush forth
To where, as yet, the agitated main
Disowns the bonds that Greenland's shores enchain:
A while, the ocean, mindful on defence,
With shifting billows blunts the cold intense:
Its surface thicken'd by the chill around,
More heavy, sinks into the depth profound;
And, as the billows from the wind recede,
Still warmer draughts the empty space pervade:
But when, in course, the waters all ascend,
And all confess the action of the wind,
More slow the surface from the blast recedes,
The cold the action of the tide impedes,
The restless floods become a solid plain,
And frigid fetters bind the torpid main.

What wonder is it that this potent gale,
Which o'er the mighty ocean can prevail,
To which the hardy son of Greenland yields,
And binds our navies in its frozen fields !

What

What wonder, tho' it here pervade each scene,
And o'er those wilds, and o'er these rivers reign!

How heedless he, in scanty vestments clad,
That, careless, ventures on the ice to tread,
When, o'er these regions, piercing Boreas blows,
Howls thro' the woods, and drifts the new-laid snows.
If far he stray, the keen etherial flood,
Pervades his skin, and thickens all his blood;
His frigid limbs forego their native hue,
Then livid red gives way to deep'ning blue;
The sanguine current stagnates in his veins,
And cold, intense, his active pow'rs enchains.
Happy, at length, if some obsequious door,
To his maim'd limbs a shelter may procure:
But if the wand'rer finds no like resource,
Behold the sequel in the frozen corse,
That lies, perhaps, unheeded in the snows,
Till weeping thaws the hidden spot disclose.

Nor in the fields alone the cold prevails,
Nor only there pervade the frigid gales;
The shelter'd domes confess their searching breath,
Which pierces walls, and issues from beneath.

The shiv'ring stranger fees with new surprize,
As in the morn his chamber he surveys,
That fields of ice the solid mass pervade,
And on the wall like pendant charts are spread.

No more the merchant climbs the hoary height,
Foremost to spy the navies come in sight;
Or should his eye, accustom'd to explore
The utmost verges of the neighb'ring shore,
Unmindful, glance along the frozen stream,
Soon he recovers from his waking dream,
Perhaps, to count the months that shall recede,
Ere drooping Commerce rears her languid head.

Full many a Briton has deplo'red the day*,
That to these regions he resolv'd to stray,
Where commerce varies like the ether stream,
And Winter passes not unlike a dream.

* Of all the English who have chosen Canada as the seat of their endeavours to acquire opulence and independence, few have been successful. This may, in some measure, be owing to the situation of the country, inaccessible in the winter season, except by land: and this circumstance, as it procures for the man of reflection leisure to prosecute his studies, is taken advantage of by the profligate, for the ignoble purposes of riot and dissipation.

How wide a field for those who love to err,
And make their pleasures their peculiar care !
Some, void of thought, with mein fantastic rove,
And shake the dice, or breath th' ideal love ;
While, crowds combin'd, their mental pow'r's impair,
By scorching draughts, that short-liv'd joys confer :
Alas ! how few adhere to virtue true,
Or stamp their conduct with its heav'nly hue !
How very few the right from wrong can scan,
Or, knowing, prize this privilege of man !

Does Winter, then, no soothing charms display ?
Are all departed with th' autumnal ray ?
No---here we still some local pleasures find,
Some mental joys are to no clime confin'd :
Now, wrapp'd in furs, the wealthy mount their cars,
Each, smoothly gliding, like a barge appears ;
Now study courts whoever will but dare
Spurn sensual joys, and each ignoble care.
Now, soothing Hope fresh offers to the view,
Those rural charms that Summer's flight withdrew,
Again to bloom when some short months revolve,
And vernal thaws the Winter's weight dissolve ;

When

When parting Spring's more ardent warmth begins,
Ere radiant Phœbus quits th' aerial twins.
Then shall the dreary woods again look gay,
And fleecy flocks on flow'ry meadows play ;
Then, shall the groves their balmy odours send,
Upon the pinions of the whisp'ring wind :
Then Philomela shall resume her lays,
And flutt'ring warblers strains melodious raise ;
Then, shall the navies on our shores appear,
And Trade, again, resume his full career.
Thus, busy Hope the active mind employs,
By still alluding to untasted joys.

So, when his days with wintry clouds are spread,
And howling tempests gather round his head ;
The wise man soars on Hope's celestial wing,
Towards the regions of eternal spring.

Now, having fung Canadian woods and vales,
Its Summer's heat, and Winter's frigid gales,
Let me remark, as climates I compare,
And manners note, 'tis Britain I prefer.
Dear isle ! where temp'rate years their empire hold,
Free from extremes of ardent heat or cold ;

Thy

Thy spacious fields, tho' generous the soil,
Exertion claim, and urge thy sons to toil:
Compleatly bounded by the mighty main,
No neighb'ring state intrudes on thy domain:
Thy commerce, trade, and industry surpass,
What Europe shows, or Carthage could amass:
Ah then, beware thro' luxury to fall,
And selfish pride, the common foes of all.
Delightful isle! injur'd by artful men,
Fomenting broils, in hopes of private gain;
Not gain, but loss, when on such terms procur'd,
And, by base arts, from indigence secur'd.
Yet, lo where western climes their forests spread,
Disorders spring, and faction rears its head:
For, in each state, are restless sons of strife,
Who, still unhappy, still molest thro' life.

Britain, to thee my vent'rous course I bend,
From realms remote, where beasts with men contend;
Where cultur'd fields but narrow tracts display,
Hemm'd in by wilds, where savage nations stray.
The novelty of lonely wilds and woods,
And desart hills, and wide expanding floods,

Full soon subsides: and then we long again,
For gayer scenes, the smiling haunts of men:
Yet, small delight in local views we find,
Compar'd to that arising from the mind:
The chaste[n]d mind, where purer pleasure glows,
And joy receiving as it joy bestows.
In ev'ry region habitable made,
Are local comforts still commix'd with shade;
Fair fragrant flow'r[s] the lurid heath adorn,
And tender roses ripen on the thorn.
If there's a spot you prize above the rest,
And there to live conceive is to be blest:
Your wish attain'd, and this lov'd spot your share,
New wants disturb, new wishes claim your care.
Ev'n in the bosom of domestic joy,
We ever trace a mixture of alloy.
More proofs unite, in teaching, chequer'd bliss,
From aught below, is all we can possess:
And, thus, invoke our higher hopes to rise,
Beyond the world, and centre in the skies.

THE END.

